

PREPARING THE NETS

Text: Matthew 4:21

Luke 5:2, 4-11

Key Word: Preparation

Key Thought: How is God Preparing His Church to Evangelize

******* As a young boy, one of my favourite pass times was fishing. I would spend hours sitting along the canal bank with my line in the water.

I soon learned that there were skills that I needed to catch fish. I tried new baits, new locations (holes) as well as many styles (casting, lose line, tight line, trolling, jerking, & jigging).

I was taught that different fish respond totally different. A rock bass and a sunfish were immediately lured to worms especially on sunny days.

The suckers and eels seemed to bite better on rainy days with a line close to the bottom. I found that you could catch Perch, three at a time. The Pike and Pickerel loved the challenge of a lure.

All this taught me that we can prepare for a large catch. We can do 90% of our fishing right and fail at only 10% and come home with a meagre catch. *******

It seems to me that the same principle applies in personal evangelism. One thing I've always wanted to do but was prohibited by law was to fish with a net. In Jesus' day it was the most common way of fishing. We can learn a spiritual lesson about "*fishing for men*" by this illustration.

How Is God Preparing His Church to Bring in the Harvest? How Can We Become More Effective as "Fishers of Men."

I. BY MENDING OUR NETS (Matthew 4:21)

II. BY WASHING OUR NETS (Luke 5:2)

III. BY STRETCHING OUR NETS (Luke 5:4-11)

This account is recorded in all four Gospels (Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:2-11; John 1:35-42).

The word used for "*preparing*" is derived from a root word that means "*to complete thoroughly.*" It means "*to repair, mend, restore, prepare.*" Thirteen times the word is translated "*perfectly joined together.*"

Lets Consider the 3 Ways Fishermen "*Prepared Their Nets.*"

I. BY MENDING OUR NETS (Matthew 4:21)

"he (Jesus) saw other brethren, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending (preparing - NIV) their nets; he called them."

Matthew 4:21

A common net was placed in many perilous conditions during its use. Sometimes a large fish would tear away at it trying to escape. Sunken boats and rocks were also destructive to a good net. Also the water also tended to break down the composition of the twined rope.

You could often see a fisherman sitting down along a shoreline after a day of fishing to "*replace*" or "*repair*" the areas of damage. **If these holes were not repaired, they would expand and the catch would be lost.**

I wonder what are some areas in our Net that needs to be frequently mended?

A. Friendliness

I believe a church should be the friendliest place in the world. We should encourage long-lasting friendships to take place. Perhaps we need more times of fellowship where we can welcome new people.

Friendships can develop into a deep and meaningful relationship.

"A True friend is like a good book - the inside is better than the cover."

Friendship goes beyond the surface relationship. It's healthy to be transparent before each other. We all realize we're not perfect. This is the place where the greatest amount of mending is often done. We must get past our differences.

"The difference between our friends and our enemies is this: Our friends 'love us in spite of our faults, and our enemies hate us in spite of our virtues."

"A friend loves at all times and a brother is born for adversity."

Proverbs 17:17

I. BY MENDING OUR NETS (Matthew 4:21) (Contd.)

B. Care and Concern

I wonder how many people are part of our "school of fish" who feel bruised and wounded by events that they've faced. We've all had times when we've wanted to reach out and hug someone who's hurting - Don't hesitate - they probably need to be hugged. Ask them first. I'm sure some of you in this service today who would really benefit by a good warm hug.

Some who here are bruised and feel the pain of being ripped apart. **Our Churches need many good Samaritans who come alongside and pour in healing ointment of care and concern and be willing to pay the cost for full restoration.**

*"We went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn **and took care of him.**"*

Luke 10:34

This Samaritan took care of this victim of violence at a crucial time in his life. I wonder how many have been beaten and robbed and left for dead in our city - in our workplace - in our church - in our homes !!!???

II. BY WASHING OUR NETS (Luke 5:2)

"he saw there at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets."

Luke 5:2

I believe that we have so much work to do in bringing in the harvest of lost souls that we often forget that certain preparations are required. The Bible says that the fishermen had left their boats along the shoreline. **The would not return to the boats until they had washed the nets.**

It was quite common for a storm to dislodge branches and twigs, along with seaweed and dead fish. These had to be removed from the net. After all foreign items were removed, the nets needed to be thoroughly washed in the water and dried in the hot sun. The sun would help to bleach the fibre back to its original colour even though it didn't contain salt in the Sea of Galilee. These experienced fishermen recognized that their toil would become ineffective without clean nets.

How can we "*clean our nets*" and become more effective in reaching those who have not yet accepted Christ as their Saviour?

II. BY WASHING OUR NETS (Luke 5:2) (Contd.)

A. Washing by the Word

"Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

26. to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing of the water through the Word."

Ephesians 5:25,26

The Word of God has a cleansing effect upon our lives.

"How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word."

Psalm 119:9

"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

Psalm 119:11

Luke 5:3 tells us that Jesus got into Simon's boat, had him release it from the shoreline (without the net) and "taught the people from the boat." They were taught the Word before going out and catching the large number of fish that began to break their nets.

A consistent diet of God's Holy Word will help us to live a godly life. Sin will be exposed and brought to the surface. The Bible will bring our sinfulness to light in order that we may be cleansed - or made white again.

We may pick up some "stains" as we're out fishing. Allow the Word of God to search your heart. It has a cleansing effect upon our lives if we allow it to. Use it abundantly. Use it daily. Don't avoid Scriptures that focus upon your need for change but rather read them - study them and obey them.

B. Washing of Rebirth

"He saved us by the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit."

Titus 3:5

We need to understand that the act of salvation is also a process. We are definitely saved at our time of salvation. But there is also a process that is called Sanctification that continues in our Christian life. Salvation begins the process of Sanctification. It is within our choice to live a godly life or not.

II. BY WASHING OUR NETS (Luke 5:2) (Contd.)

B. Washing of Rebirth (Contd.)

If we stain our nets by ungodly living the net will soon become empty. We don't attract the world by being like the world because we then offer no hope for a change that is desperately needed. There is nothing wrong with having a periodical washing by recommitting an area of our life that has become soiled by the world.

III. BY STRETCHING OUR NETS (Luke 5:4-11)

Fishermen not only have to mend their nets and wash their nets they also have to periodically stretch them. **If the nets are not stretched they will eventually shrink in size and therefore limit the catch.**

I believe that God is stretching His Church. Some of us are still hanging out on the line. Some of us feel like we are being spread out on a hard rock with the sun beating down on our body. We feel like we are being torn apart. **We can't see any value in what is happening.** Yet God is allowing us to be stretched for a purpose.

One of the greatest servants of God in the New Testament experienced exactly what I'm talking about. His words penetrate the very fibre of our troubled hearts.

*" . . . dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed;
10. sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything."*

II Corinthians 6:9,10

"We do not want you to be uniformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even to life. 9. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death, But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead."

II Corinthians 1:8,9

III. BY STRETCHING OUR NETS (Luke 5:4-11) (Contd)

#6866 - Burden Becomes a Bridge

*** A biologist tells how he watched an ant carry a piece of straw which seemed like a huge burden for it.

The ant came to a crack in the earth which was too wide for it to cross. It stood still for a time as though pondering the situation, then put the straw across the crack and walked upon it.

Here is a lesson for all mankind! **A man's burdens can be made a bridge for his progress.** ***

The disciples had to learn not to question the Lord when He told them to put their boat out from shore and let down their nets. They obeyed the Lord but only after having reservations.

The outcome was beyond anything they could have imagined.

"When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. 7. So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink."

Luke 5:6,7

This is just another way of saying that God stretched their nets to their limits. But this time it was a joyful experience. Some stretching is not as pleasant. Yet we must keep our focus on the future. Don't question the stretching that God places you into.

Stretching may bring pain (growing pain) but it will also help you to reach higher and longer and wider levels during your next preparation. Get ready church. God is mending, washing and stretching us for His purpose to be completed.

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Date: Sept 25/16

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: To The Ends of the Earth - G

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B. Care and Concern - *Luke 10:34*

II. BY WASHING OUR NETS (Luke 5:2)

A. Washing by the Word - *Ephesians 5:25,26; Psalm 119:9; Psalm 119:11; Luke 5:3*

B. Washing of Rebirth - *Titus 3:5*

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